

# SKYWORDS

May 2022



# Chairman's Chat

On 16 Dec 21, just before Christmas, a number of you flew at Tailbridge. A CANP had been submitted and published as a NOTAM. Towards the end of the day, I received a report that a pair of jets had flown parallel to the hill just behind take-off. The report came from a pilot on the ground but he said that there were 2 x HG and about 5 x PG in the air at the time. Although I asked for volunteers on the WhatsApp group, and a few confirmed the incident, nobody was prepared to submit an [AIRPROX](#) report.

I managed to establish that the 2 jets in question were Swiss F18s, part of a detachment that had been operating out of RAF Leeming on Exercise YORKNITE. One of the jets had developed a fault and, since they had to wait for parts/repairs, a pair had been delayed in their journey home.

Since the F18 pilots had left the country, none of our members was prepared to submit a formal AIRPROX, and it was nearly Christmas, I decided just to drop the Station Flight Safety Officer (SFSO) an email asking them to ensure that visiting crews were fully briefed on the importance of checking NOTAMs as part of their pre-flight planning. I wasn't surprised to get an out of office message telling me that he had departed on Christmas leave.

In the New Year, on return from leave, the SFSO got back to me, apologised for the incursion, and confirmed that visiting crews would indeed be reminded of the need to check NOTAMs. That was as much as I had hoped for. I made the offer to help in any future incidents involving hang gliders or paragliders. I didn't expect that my offer would be taken up quite so quickly...

The next day he contacted me again. A Hawk T1 had been conducting a low-level sortie in the Lake District. As they banked steeply over Thirlmere to avoid terrain the non-handling pilot glanced out of the cockpit and caught a fleeting glimpse of a canopy below them. They climbed to safe altitude, discussed what had happened and decided to abort the sortie and return to base to submit an AIRPROX.

I passed the details on to the Cumbria Soaring Club. Initially we all suspected that the canopy in question might be a paraglider attempting the milk run from Clough Head to Grasmere. However, following some detective work, that *Hercule Poirot* himself would have been proud of, Ian Henderson and Tim Oliver eventually established that it was actually a base jumper leaping off Raven Crag. You can view a very short video clip of the incident from their perspective [here](#). (Warning – strong language.)

There was some discussion, and indeed enthusiasm from the group of base jumpers, that they might subscribe to CANP, but they are a pretty secretive group (landowner permission, insurance, etc?) and it would be hard to justify the '5 in the air' rule, so I suspect that it will come to nothing. The report should make interesting reading though.

From my perspective it was interesting to note that the crew took it seriously enough to abort their sortie. Please keep the CANPs coming when flying during the working week: it demonstrates that we are professional aviators and helps to keep us all safe. When reported, incursions give us a really useful opportunity to highlight our activities and to remind military aviators that they don't have exclusive use of the low flying system. I've had a chat with the UK AIRPROX Board and, whilst the reporting system is intended for the captain of the aircraft who believes that his safety has been compromised, in extremis they would consider an AIRPROX from a pilot who witnesses an incident: sometimes, like an Air Traffic Controller, you have a better perspective from the ground.

Fly safely,  
**Martin Baxter**  
Chairman

# Flight Diary

## 2<sup>nd</sup> April

**Pete & Sara:**

Inspired to get out after the super inspiring 'Ten t'undred Academy' lecture this week. I trotted up Kettlewell, on take off the wind was gusting from nil to too strong. Then it hailed. Once the black clouds passed, I flew swiftly down.



## 8<sup>th</sup> April

**Pete Logan:**

It looked blown out in the Dales. Joe and I turned up to Sutton and Cowling Pinnacles where it was light. Tam turned up later.

Had a few hops as the cycles came through and the fourth attempt was rewarded with a semi respectable climb out. It weakened off around 2400ft though. I headed for a building cloud on the dark moors behind but it was too far away and I landed near to Keighley Moorside Reservoir.

We don't have any listing of anyone ever going XC from here so I suppose I just set the site record at 4 and a bit km.

**Chris K:**

It was on the light side on Park Fell, too - light enough that it took half an hour and several attempts to escape down the ridge to the Bowl and Ingleborough, where I found a climb that got me to base. I had Barlick as a turnpoint, but got chased off by showers, and landed at Burnley under angry skies.

**Pete Darwood:**

On and off at Addingham. Got just under and an hour with a few top landings and some kiting practice thrown in. Called it a day and walked home when showers could be seen over Embsay moor.

**Martin Baxter:**

I see that Jake and Dave managed 100km flights from Model Ridge. With hindsight I wish I'd gone there, although I suspect that the window between light and blown out was quite short.

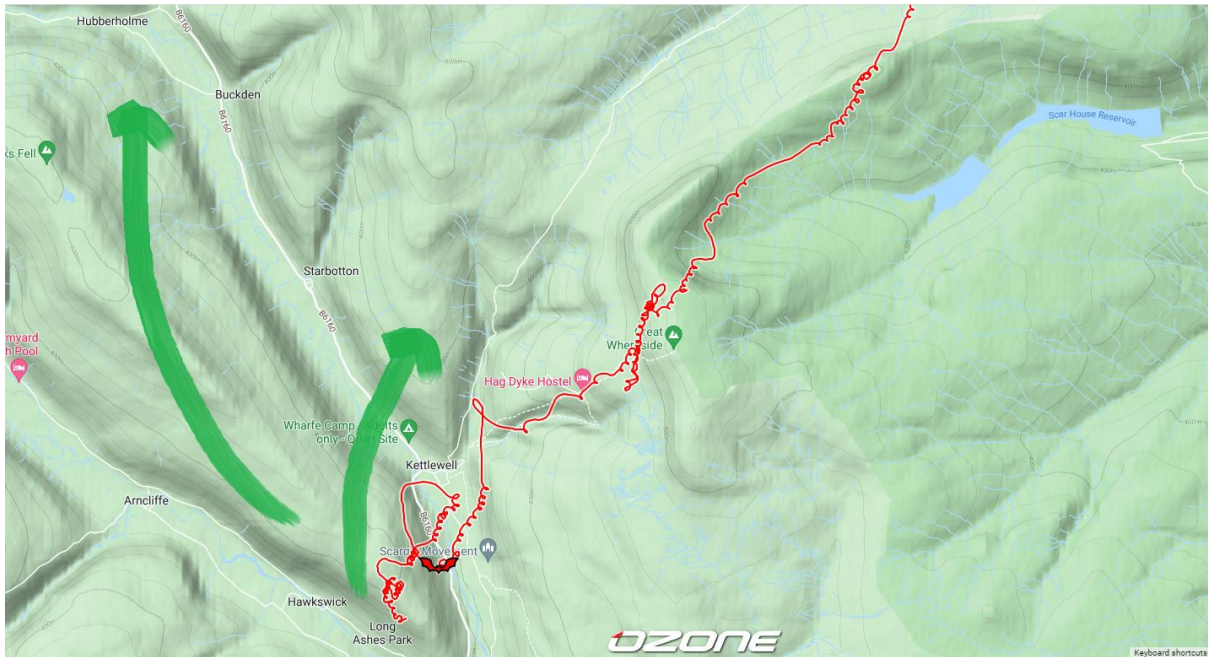
## 10<sup>th</sup> April

***Pete Darwood:***

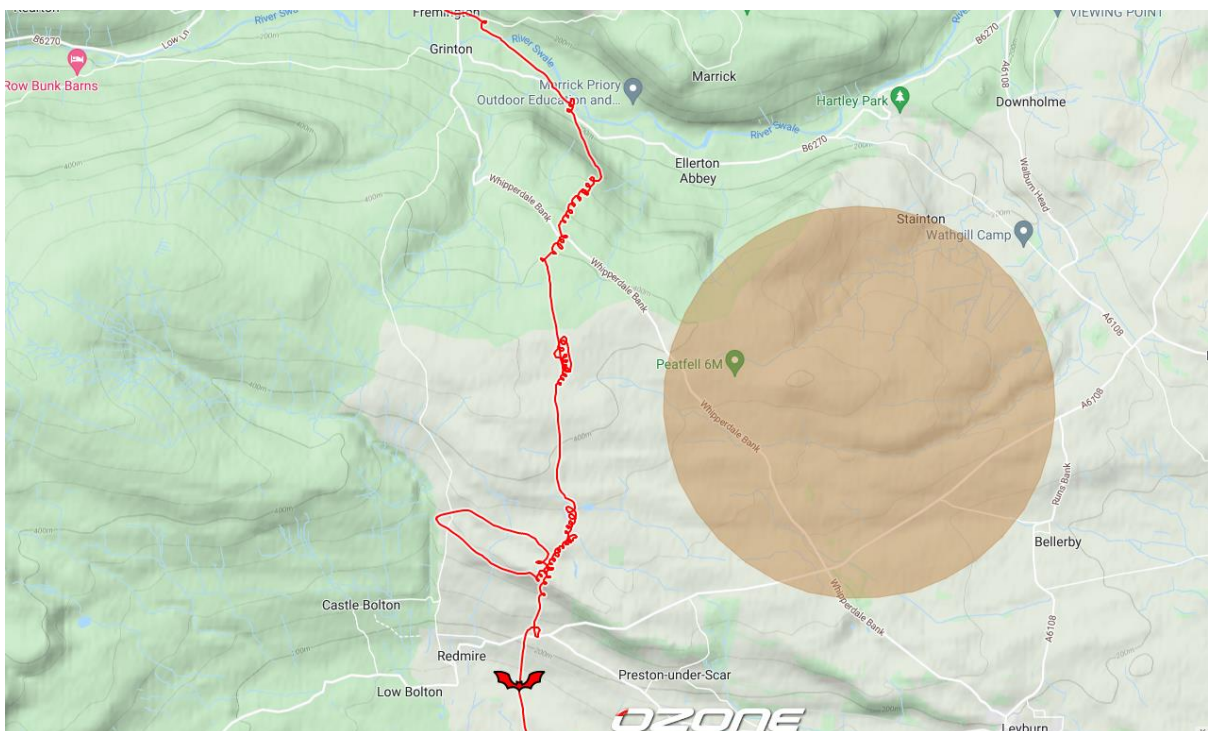
5\* and cold but with light winds and top cover forecast. I debated going to fell rescue training, glad I did not; the cold airmass trumped the top cover on the day. A classic windbank day...

The wind was forecast to go southerly with a little more strength, so the talk of triangles moved to heading north. On the hill there was a good crowd, with nice cycles and after a quick chat and 10 minutes of kiting I took one at 11am and went straight up to 1300m. It seemed a bit keen to leave so early so we pushed back to the hill from Kettlewell but diverted to pick up the next gaggle and that was that. We all then made the mistake of getting stuck on Great Whernside (need more west in it to head there?), and being near the bottom of the stack I had to push forward to get something from Providence beck to stay in the game.

Note, it seems that some of the later pilots took a much better line from Windbank, using the higher ground to the west of Coverdale or even Bishopdale for an easier ride to Nappa Scar.



The lower group flopped over the back of Great Whernside and headed to James who had something rough and snotty low on the flanks of Little Whernside, which got Pete L, James and I properly back in the game. Alex found the climb on Penhill but then him, Chris F, Jake and Richard headed crosswind up Wensleydale leaving Pete L and I no chance. So onto the cliffs above Redmire it was. I had a bit more height than Pete and thus after a lap I was able to take a climb to 1100m.



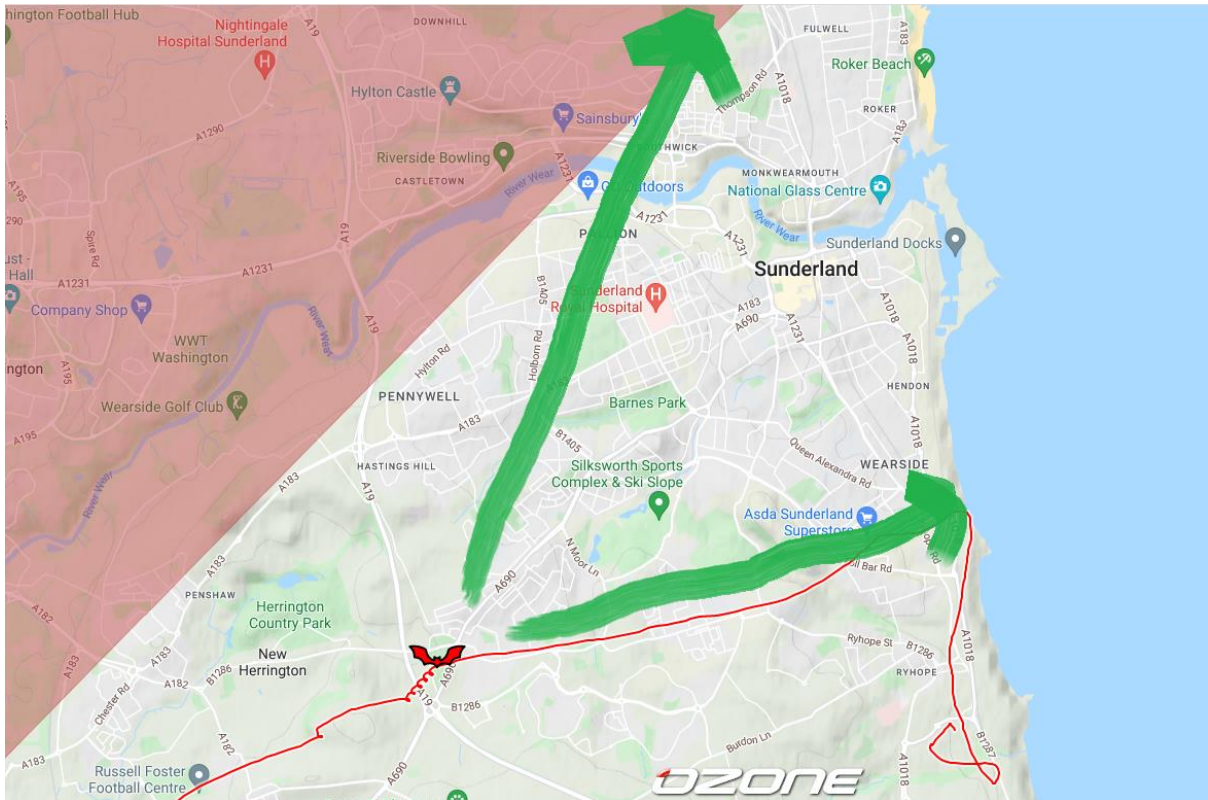
Now on my own I patiently worked the moors over to Fremington edge (wind still SSW) where I got half a climb out and flopped over the back gambling on Chris Kay, who had flown over my head, climbing in something on the moors behind. We flew together to near Barningham, deciding there was still too much west in the wind to head north, before meeting up with Nick Pain and Allan Blackett. We waited at the freezing heights of 1700m for Pete L just past Barnard Castle as there was lots of top cover making it difficult to see/guess

where the climbs were forming.

A long sinky glide to Bishop Auckland, where Nick found a low climb, unfortunately loosing Allan and Chris, before Nick, Pete and I headed for Durham. Once again low we spread out, with me at the bottom, but fortunately picking up a weak climb from the sheltered Wear valley on the edge of Durham whilst fumbling with the camera. All three of us patiently worked this, with a now more southerly wind, until getting back up to 1300m north of Durham.



Here we separated, with Nick heading for landing at Penshaw monument and an easy retrieve, Pete heading east towards Sunderland train station, and me taking another couple of top ups to arrive at 1300m above the A19 to the west of Sunderland. I then had a choice of 6km cross-wind to the coast, where it turned out Alex, Jake and Richard had already landed, or 10km downwind across the Wear again for an open distance 100km under the 3000' ceiling. Not much debate really, after tagging the sea at Wearside I headed down the coast to Alex and Richard's cold windy field, where we shared a minibus taxi with Jake, Pete and a pigeon fancier back to Blubberhouses. A great, if technical day out, with varying company, inappropriately dressed in summer gloves, sans handwarmers, and without having topped up my flying phone sim or changed the maps back to UK.



## **Joseph Edmonds:**

Lovely day on Windbank, first xc day of the year for me, though only a short flight unfortunately.

Tried for quite some time to get a decent climb out but couldn't seem to find something convincing enough to tempt me over the back. Eventually found something pretty good but once I was at decent height I had a look around and spotted a great looking cloud over the very summit of Windbank so I cross wended up to it. I was rewarded with a smooth and rapid 5ms climb! Definitely not what I was expecting but very welcome.

I went across to Buckden pike and found another climb there. I could see Charles in the distance under what looked like the last cloud. It seemed that the sky was much better a bit further south and so perhaps the route over Buckden Pike was not the best. I managed to find another climb in Bishopdale, something of a leeseide thermal but very gentle.

Charles joined me in this climb and I'm kicking myself for not hanging back so we could work the overcast and cloudless sky ahead. Instead I set off on glide to Penhill.

I connected with some lifting air, but horrifyingly, my Vario stayed silent. I checked the display on my phone to confirm I had actually found lift and confirmed I was in 0.5 to 1.5ms. it was classic low save territory. I quickly pondered if I had any chance getting the climb without Vario and decided hell no, so in true IT professional style, I turned it off and on again. This did work, but cost me about a minute by which point I was uncomfortably low and the wafts of lifting air were not to be found. I opted to glide into bishopdale for a hopefully easy retrieve.

Not really sure what happened with my Vario. I've recently set up a new tone profile with silence when I'm on glide. It's actually really nice, but I'm wondering if the short wafts of rising air weren't enough for it to flip back into making sounds mode. I think I'm going to have to go back to the continuous sound profile.

Big thanks to Tam for coming to get me, and massive apologies to Martin who also tried to find me it seems, I had forgotten to use livetrack24 so my position didn't update and I also forgot to cancel it once I knew I was getting a ride.

I decided to pay it forward and retrieved Ges and then Charles, who managed to fly over the top of me for an extra 10k.

Yet again I've been given the lesson that racing off on your own when getting to the top of a climb is never a good option if you have a chance of being patient and forming a gaggle, or just drifting a bit at base to get the most out of the climb.



# I learned from that...

Spain. We're at a site called Cenes. It faces NW so it's regarded as an afternoon site: it doesn't really get going until the sun comes round onto the face and the thermals become reliable.

If you get there early the best option is to walk a few hundred metres higher. This gives you access to the S face where the thermals kick off much earlier. If you can get up from here then you're set for the day. If not then just 'top' land at the NW take-off and chill out until it starts working there.

Toot and I opted to walk up to the S face. Did I mention that it's a very committed launch on a spined back ridge? No problem with a decent breeze and a reverse launch though. We arrived to find that there was a decent breeze, verging on strong, so we quickly got ready. Sod's Law: as I got set to launch the wind dropped to zero and, at times, the streamer actually indicated a bit of a tailwind. I pulled my wing up in one waft, but brought it back down again when it felt flaccid and I didn't dare reverse any further down the ever-steepening hill. I bundled my glider up and laid out on top of the ridge again. Not enough wind to build a wall, but I pulled the tips out whilst still attached to the wing, and then waited for a thermal. And waited. And waited.

Eventually a waft came through and I survived a reverse launch running backwards. So, what's the lesson here, you ask? Well, I've missed the critical part out.

Having re-set my wing, I had failed to notice a line-over. Fortunately, another pilot spotted it and pulled the tip through for me. Would I have noticed it, in time to abort, if I had tried to launch? Possibly not.

For me the key learning point is to be very wary if switching from a reverse launch to a forward one (the one that the conditions demanded). Building a wall for a reverse launch allows you to check that everything is as it should be. If you can't build a decent wall then you really must lay out your wing properly, and that means getting out of your harness (unless you have help).

Oh, and the thing that we all need more of – PATIENCE. Soon after I took off the thermals started working again. Had I waited for a few more minutes, I would have enjoyed a safe and easy take off, rather than one that I got away with.

***Martin***

# Competitions on the mind...

*Charles McDonald*

So I had some exciting plans for 2020. It was going to be my intro to competitions year, and you can probably see the noise I made late 2019 early 2020.

As we're all aware, the universe had different plans for us!

I'm probably being insane, as a quote often attributed to a wise man states "Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results.", but I'm once again caught making plans.

I was accepted into the Gin Wide Open which has been cancelled 2 years running now, but hopefully will go ahead in July, and I still have a place.

While I was making noise about Colombia. Joseph pointed out and by subtle and canny means convinced me to apply for the Ozone Open in Piedechinche. This I have done, but both of us are still chewing our nails waiting for invite to pay.

Anyway, there is also the [Naviter Open](#) in June which I may enter and who knows what else... Colombian Open once they post details??

So hoping the universe's attention is elsewhere, I'm looking at what, besides my flying skills, I can do to prep.

Amateur comp cover is available from TrueTraveller (not cheap)!!

I've also been watching some YouTube videos I watched a few years ago...

So, to get to the point of this post, I would like to share some worthwhile resources I found...

Link - [Some great competition tips](#)

Note to self. Ensure fields 'Time to Start' and 'Height Over Goal' are both on my instrument

[Flying faster in competitions](#)

[Flying the gaggle in a competition](#)

If anyone has any other useful resources regarding competition flying, please do share.

Ultimately it's about having fun and learning along the way..

## **Richard Meek:**

You've found some good resources already Charles, one I'd add to the list is Flying Rags for Glory by Mads Syndergard

<https://ny.syndergaard.dk/rags-for-glory/>

Another video I like is from Tom Payne

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=LIEH4B8xEIc>

# Regional Airspace User Working Group (RAUWG)

(From <https://www.dhpc.org.uk/forum/viewtopic.php?f=23&t=1912&p=12050#p12050>)

Meeting on 7 Apr 22 at RAF Leeming.

**Hawk.** As predicted at the last meeting, 100 Sqn (Hawk T1), consisting of very experienced pilots acting in the 'enemy'/Close Air Support role, has been disbanded. They have been replaced by 11 (Qatari) Sqn operating 9 x Hawk T2. The aircraft look much the same externally, but have a Typhoon glass cockpit for training purposes. They are only 6 weeks into their training programme but are currently planning 3 x 1 hour sorties with 4 aircraft per day, amounting to about 2,000hrs per year (about half that of 100 Sqn).

The students will have had about 6-8 hours prior experience in jets, it will be their first time in a new aircraft, and they will be doing it all in a foreign language! Instructors are a mixture of British and Qatari. The good news is that they will be operating mostly above 8,000' and have thus far been using the area South of York.

Aside from the World Cup, you may be interested to note that 10% of our gas comes from Qatar...

**Exercises.** Access to ranges (North Sea, Spadeadam), Lossiemouth and low flying training areas make RAF Leeming an attractive proposition for visiting fixed wing and rotary aircraft. Possible options for counter drone and US aggressor squadrons.

**ATC.** The published opening hours for RAF Leeming are Mon – Thu 0800-1800, and Fri 0900-1700. The ATZ is closed outside these hours (although the airfield may still be active). ATC is running at about 55-65% manpower so they may operate on reduced hours, but you won't know that unless you try to talk to them.

Both primary and secondary radars are being replaced in the near future. The new secondary radar will adopt Wide Area Multilateration (WAM) technology which is apparently much improved. It's so good that, to filter out wind turbines, it won't detect aircraft flying at less than 40kts.

ATC does have access to Flarm, Pilot Aware and OGN but will not pass traffic information to aircraft unless an alert has been confirmed by radar (so not us).

**Pilot Aware.** The more that I hear about Pilot Aware, the more that I think that it represents the best prospect of an all-inclusive Electronic Conspicuity solution. It's the only system that combines the signals from Flarm, Fanet, ADS-B, Mode S, Mode C, etc into one source of information. It's network of ground stations (ATOM) seeks to relay information, and this is enhanced by powered aircraft using Pilot Aware, that also act as a relay. Whilst those of us with Flarm can rejoice in the knowledge that we can be seen, it's only effective if the aircraft flying towards you is suitably equipped with a visual display or audio alert. Most are not.

Pilot Aware has developed a device that is light enough to be fitted to a drone, possibly enabling it to automatically deconflict with other EC equipped aircraft. The lightweight device may be suitable for us in the future.

**Medical Drone Delivery.** A company called Apian are trialling the delivery of prescription drugs, especially for chemotherapy, by drone. If, for example, the chemotherapy drugs are delivered the night before, and then on the morning of the procedure that patient isn't fit enough, £8K worth of drugs might be wasted. One trial is being conducted between Thorney Island (Portsmouth) and the Isle of Wight. This fixed wing drone has a wingspan of 5m, weights 100kg (+20kg payload) and flies at 100mph at about 400' AGL. Vertical Take-Off and Landing (VTOL) variants are slower but offer greater flexibility.

Of more interest in our region is a trial in Northumberland between Ashington and Alnwick/Berwick possibly using routes over the sea. Another trail will take place between Hexam-A66-Carlisle-Whitehaven. Initially the trials will utilise Temporary Danger Areas (TDA) – corridors up to 800' AGL on certain days of the week. These will be subject to consultation but, in the long term the aspiration is that EC technology will provide a solution. Night operations would obviously suit us better.

**NATS.** We had a presentation from the National Air Traffic Service (Prestwick). They do offer a service outside controlled airspace, but only to pilots with airband radio, so I won't bore you with the details.

**LBA ACP.** No presentation, but I did sit next to the ATC Services Manager. In conversation he told me that consultants, Cyrrus, had only been awarded the contract until Stage 2. The contract will then be put out to tender again.

***Martin***